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ABSTRACT

A research study was conducted to explore in depth the adult/community education administrator position as it exists in Florida in order to gain as much information as possible about the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to do the job well. A special focus was on the skills needed by adult/community educators to a greater extent than K-12 educators. Based on the literature of job analysis techniques, the research combined the strengths of several methods: in-depth interviews and observation of incumbents, group brainstorming, development of a list of major areas of responsibility and skills and knowledge needed for each, and comparison of the Florida Principal Competencies with the results of these steps. Two supervisors and seven other adult education experts were interviewed, and 23 attendees at the Florida Administrators of Adult Education meeting in June 1988 were interviewed. The study found many areas of congruence with the K-12 competencies, but also found that adult education administrators put much greater emphasis on needs assessment, designing programs to meet individual needs, changing course offerings to retain attendance, marketing and public relations, recruitment and management of volunteers, and adult education principles. (The job analysis and description of needed competencies for adult education administrators and 40 references are included in this report.) (KC)

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The Adult Community Education Administrator Position

A Job Analysis

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Florida Atlantic University

Adult Education Office

1988

The concept of lifelong learning and the necessity of providing cradle-to-grave educational opportunities is gaining increasingly widespread acceptance, providing strong support for the expansion of community schools. Adult education is the fastest-growing area in all of education. Those individuals who administer adult and community education programs in our public schools are in a position to have a tremendous impact on our communities. These individuals administer such programs as Adult Basic Education (ABE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult High School, General Education Development (GED) Preparation, and a wide variety of noncredit personal enrichment classes. The personal enrichment classes cover a broad range of topics, from practical skills to hobbies and leisure activities. They might include anything from basic flower arranging to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, calligraphy, small engine repair or aerobic exercise classes. In some locations, only the academic courses are offered (adult education programs); in others, only the noncredit activities are offered, often with the addition of after school child-care programs (community school programs); others offer the full range of programs and services (adult/community education programs).

These programs provide a valuable resource for human development. Through them, individuals can learn to speak English, learn to read and write, or improve their literacy skills, thus preparing themselves to more fully and

productively participate in society. Others come for the less urgent but not less important purpose of enhancing their lives through a wide variety of practical and recreational activities. The individuals who participate in these programs are not a captive audience. Unlike the K-12 students, they are not required to be there. Therefore, they must be convinced that there is something valuable to gain before they come, and they must find a program that meets their needs when they come. These two conditions must be met if an adult/community education program is to survive; and the success of a program is directly proportional to its effectiveness in accomplishing them. Obviously, the individual who administers an adult/community education program has a tremendous impact on its success. Adult/community education administrators need to be well-prepared for their jobs. Appropriate and effective preservice and inservice training must be based on a thorough understanding of the responsibilities of a position and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in order to fulfill those responsibilities.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore in depth the adult/community education administrator position as it exists in Florida in order to gain as much information as possible about the knowledge, skills, and attitudes

necessary to do the job well, with a special focus on the skills needed by adult/community educators to a greater extent than K-12 educators. This information will provide a firm basis for effective inservice and preservice education for adult/community education administrators.

Job Analysis Procedures and Purposes

The results of a job analysis can be used for a wide variety of purposes:

1. to develop job descriptions for use in job evaluation;
2. to devise employment and placement instruments and procedures;
3. for job design or redesign;
4. to establish organizational staffing requirements and spans of control;
5. to determine training requirements;
6. to evaluate employee job performance; and
7. to review operations by comparing actual and desired job performance within jobs and identifying overlaps between jobs.

(Gael, 1985; Field and Greenwood, 1987)

Field and Greenwood (1987) point out that gathering information for job analysis results in either "work-oriented or worker-oriented products." They describe work-oriented products as those which involve defining a job in terms of task activities or worker functions. From this information, employee performance measures such as performance appraisals or productivitity assessments can be

developed. From the work-oriented information, they assert, " job analysts' inferences or judgment can be used to develop worker-oriented products." These are described as "products which involve identifying employee specifications, such as knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics necessary for successful job performance." The employee specifications, then, would be used in the development of selection instruments: tests, application forms, and employment interviews.

Gael (1985) describes a series of techniques for deriving task statements for target jobs: observation, content analysis of written materials, interviews, and questionnaires. Field and Greenwood (1987) describe a wide variety of job analysis techniques:

1. the job analysis interview in which individuals or groups familiar with the position (usually incumbents or supervisors) are asked about all aspects of a job;
2. the task analysis inventory, which focuses on what gets done and the relative importance of various tasks;
3. the Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ), a generic job analysis questionnaire focusing on basic work behavior rather than specific tasks;
4. the Guidelines-Oriented Job Analysis (GOJA), a step-by-step paper-and-pencil process through which a job incumbent lists job duties and rates them in terms of frequency and importance;
5. the Iowa Merit Employment Systems (IMES) method, very similar to GOJA, but conducted in small group sessions;
6. Functional Job Analysis (FJA), in which a job analyst applies a series of rating scales to a list of task statements; and

7. the Job Element Method (JEM), which is designed to identify the characteristics of superior performers and develop selection measures based on these characteristics.

Some of these methods rely on indepth input from just a few people (3 or 4 for the PAQ); others deal with small groups (JEM); and others require large numbers of responses to a checklist (task analysis inventory). Rather than limiting this study to one approach, it was decided that better information could be obtained through using a variety of methods and comparing the results for cross-validation.

Research Plan

Based on the research into job analysis techniques, it was decided to combine the strengths of several of the methods. In-depth interviews of incumbents and their supervisors, while generally regarded as valuable sources of information, have the drawbacks of being very time-consuming and therefore usually confined to a small number of subjects, thus possibly limiting their validity. If the information gained in individual in-depth interviews is cross-validated, however, the individual interview is an ideal place to begin. Group techniques offer the advantage of larger numbers of individuals providing input, but have the accompanying danger of "group think," having individuals follow the line of thought of the group rather than initiating their own thoughts. A combination of individual and group data-gathering provides a strong base. This combination was deemed necessary for the adult/community

education administrator position , since it is a position which involves complex and varied responsibilities. While some sources recommend limiting a job analysis of a complex position to a generic one, it was felt that to be maximally useful, this analysis should be as detailed as possible.

The final step planned for this project was a comparison of the information gained about the adult community education administrator position and the Florida Principal Competencies. In order to avoid preconceptions to the greatest extent possible, the detailed review of the principal competencies should follow rather than precede the interviews and group techniques.

The research plan included the steps listed below:

1. Interview indepth at least two supervisors of adult/community education administrators (See interview protocol in Appendix A).
2. Interview indepth and observe 6-8 adult/community education administrators.
3. Conduct a brainstorming session with a group to verify and/or expand information gained from previous steps.
4. Develop a preliminary list of major areas of responsibility and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for each.
5. Compare the Florida Principal Competencies to the results of previous steps.
6. Develop report.

Implementation

The implementation of the research plan is summarized below:

*1. Two supervisors of adult/community education administrators participated in indepth interviews.

*2. Four practicing adult/community educators recommended for their expertise were interviewed individually; three others were interviewed together.

3. The large group session involved twenty-three attendees at the Florida Administrators of Adult Education (Region V) meeting on June 10, 1988.

4. A preliminary list of major responsibilities and knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to accomplish each was developed. This list appears in Appendix B. A generic list of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by adult adminstrators was developed in the large group session. This listing constitutes Appendix C.

5. The Florida Principal Competencies were examined and compared to Appendices B and C. The results of the comparison are discussed in the next section.

*One interview was conducted by Dr. Lucy M. Guglielmino alone; three (including the group interview) jointly with Terri Frock, graduate assistant, to train her in the procedure. The remaining three individual interviews were conducted by Terri Frock.

Findings and Conclusions

Findings

1. The administrators interviewed were enthusiastic and willing to share information about the adult/community education administrator position.

2. There was a general congruence among the information provided by the supervisors and the incumbents in both individual interviews and group sessions.

3. All of the Florida Principal Competencies could be seen as important for adult-community education administrators. For a discussion of statements relating to each competency, see Appendix D.

4. There were several notable areas of difference in emphasis evident in the comparison of the K-12 competencies and the information gained in this study.

Conclusions

1. While the Florida Principal Competencies focus on generic competencies, some knowledge areas and attitudes are implied in the descriptions of the competencies and their behavioral indicators. The danger in using these competencies as a basis for the preparation or inservice education of adult/community education administrators is that the genuine differences in their positions might be ignored.

2. Based on this preliminary study, it appears that high-performing adult/community education administrators put a much greater emphasis than K-12 administrators on:
   1. needs assessment
   2. designing programs to meet individual interests and needs (especially for the community education non-credit classes)
   3. changing course offerings to keep pace with trends and maintain attendance
   4. developing collaborative community relationships
   5. marketing and public relations
   6. recruitment and management of volunteers (varies widely by program)
   7. recruitment and retention of students
   8. self-presentation
   9. adult education principles (naturally)

Recommendations

Based on this preliminary study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. That the differences between adult/community education administration and K-12 administration be studied further.

2. That preparation courses and preservice and inservice education for adult/community education administrators focus primarily on the areas of difference in know-ledge, skills, and attitudes between their position and a K-12 administrator's position. This recommendation is based on the fact that employment as an adult/community education administrator requires certification in educational leadership, which is based on the K-12 competencies.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Prepare a compilation of the knowledge, skills and attitudes derived from the individual interviews and group process which will allow response by large numbers of incumbents to gain further information on the relative importance of various areas. This would be accomplished by asking the respondents to indicate relative importance of each item and relative time spent on each (where applicable). This would provide additional information which could be useful in design-ing effective inservice and preservice education.

2. Conduct a comparative analysis of the adult/community education administrator position in other states.

Appendix A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(Individual Interviews)

1. Explain purpose of project and how interview will proceed.

2. Ask first question: What are the major areas of responsibility in your position?

3. Ask second question: What knowledge, skills and attitudes are needed for successful performance in each area?

4. Probe for additional information related to occasional responsibilities.

5. Ask third question: What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are most valuable or most needed for a beginning admini-strator?

6. Thank interviewee.

Appendix B

MAJOR AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES REQUIRED FOR EACH

The knowledge, skills and attitudes listed here are a simple compilation of those reported by the individuals interviewed (steps 1 and 2 of the research plan). Please note that know-ledge implied by skills and skills used to apply knowledge are not necessarily repeated unless they were emphasized by the interviewees. For example, in the first section, motivation theory is listed under knowledge in personnel administration. This listing implies the skill of motivating employees, which is not repeated in the skill area.

ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

*K - Selection process

Certification requirements

Supervision

Goal - setting processes

Motivation theory

Evaluation

Policies and procedures

Professional development resources and techniques

Management of volunteers

*S - Development of job descriptions

Interviewing

Resume review

Coaching

Organizing staff for maximum contribution

Communicating the importance of treating students like adults

Record - keeping

*A - Free from bias

Respectful of cultural differences.

Aware of the importance of hiring personnel representative of the student population

Committed to staff involvement in decision-making

Sensitive to needs of personnel and students

Supportive, warm

Committed to developing staff and giving them room to grow

Financial

K- Pertinent rules and regulations

Budget development procedures

Purchasing procedures

Alternate funding sources for programs

*K - Knowledge
*S - Skills
*A - Attitudes

S- Financial planning

FTE projection and accounting

Mathematics

Budget monitoring

Record-keeping

Grantsmanship

A- Importance of accuracy, completeness

Willingness to ask for help

Other Administrative Skills

Building a good advisory committee

Scheduling

Facility management

Managing special events

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

K- Communication techniques

one-on-one

small and large group

media (flyers, radio, TV, interviews)

written

S- Ability to articulate views of adult/community education

Presentation skills

Writing skills

Conflict resolution
Developing collaborative relationships

Networking - (developing true partnerships in terms of information exchange, shared programs, shared resources)

Managing group interaction

Interfacing with the day program

Negotiation

A- Communication is basic. A great deal of time and attention should be given to appropriate internal and external communication.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

K- Needs assessment techniques

Needs analysis procedures

What is current (not only from needs assessment, but also national trends)

Community resources, power structure

S- Planning procedures and techniques

Implementation processes

Procuring community involvement

Developing a course listing

A- Value of community involvement

Importance of building a program based on needs assessment

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Curriculum

Adult education principles

Competency-based education formats

State standards and frameworks

Instructional media

Of vocational programs

Of resource persons for special topics

S- Building activities and exercises around adult needs and interests

Evaluation (summative and formative)

A- The curriculum must be developed and presented in ways appropriate for adult students

Instruction

K- Principles of adult learning

instructional theory

cognitive theory

adult development

Teaching techniques for adults

Available materials

Testing procedures

S- See personnel

A- Adults deserve appropriate, quality instruction

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

K- Marketing and public relations techniques, both internal and external

Advertising media

Of target audience, both external (community) and internal (teachers and school system)

S- Recognizing promotional opportunities

Establishing good relationships with the media

Public speaking

Ability to design presentations

Ability to convey to teachers and staff the importance of courtesy and respect for each student

A- Importance of good marketing and public relations to program

Willingness to solicit and accept others' ideas

Value of each student

Perception of all teaching and non-teaching staff or representatives of the school and advisors for the students

GENERIC

K- Basic understanding of all areas supervised

S- Time management

Organizational skills

Self motivation

Decision-making

Functioning within a bureaucracy

Goal-setting

Flexibility

Community relations

A- Commitment to mission

Willingness to innovate and make mistakes

Willingness to admit mistakes

Importance of making the adult student feel respected and valued

Desire to build a better program

Importance of ensuring safety and personal well-being of students and staff

Appendix C

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES NEEDED
BY
ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS

A Generic List Developed in Small Group Sessions

Knowledge

Laws, policies and procedures related to adult education (federal, state, and local)

The school system

The community: population make-up, needs, resources, power structure

Adult education principles

Program and curriculum development principles and techniques: needs assessment, needs analysis, course development, evaluation

Skills

Traditional management skills: planning, organizing, implementing, evaluating

Leadership

Communication skills (oral and written)

Delegation

Budgeting and financial management

Record-keeping and reporting

Public relations and marketing

Flexibility

Staying current: program topics, legislation, technological innovations

Computer skills

Attitudes

Education can help individuals and communities achieve their potential

Everyone regardless of age, sex, race, or any other qualifier, deserves an equal opportunity for education.

Learning is lifelong.

Educational facilities are there to serve the entire community.

Education is a continually changing process.

Education should involve the use of community resources and relationships.

Appendix D

COMPARISON OF INTERVIEW AND GROUP PROCESS RESULTS
WITH
FLORIDA PRINCIPAL COMPETENCIES

1. Proactive orientation. Although the exact wording of this competency was not used by the interviewers, the competency was implied in many of their statements. They made many references to setting goals, planning and initiating new programs, and being willing to accept responsibility for their failures as well as their successes. Self-motivation was also listed as a generic skill.

2. Decisiveness. Decision-making was listed as one of the generic skills.

3. Commitment to school mission. This competency was listed in almost the exact words by several individuals. Commitment to the mission of the program was also evident in many other comments, but the mission referred to by adult/community educators naturally encompassed a wider scope and target audience than is reflected in the Florida Principal Com-petencies.

4. Interpersonal search. This competency was implied in the many references to using needs assessment and meeting the needs of the adult student and the community. Sensitivity to needs and interests of personnel was also mentioned.

5. Information search. This competency was reflected in the use of a wide variety of sources in making programming de-cisions and determining marketing strategies.

6. Concept formation. Again, this competency was implied in the supervisor and incumbent interviews rather than directly expressed.

7. Conceptual flexibility. Flexibility was mentioned often by the interviewees, as well as the importance of considering multiple perspectives in decision-making.

8. Managing interaction. Managing group interaction was speci-fically listed by the interviewees.

9. Persuasiveness. Persuasiveness appeared in several refer-ences made by the interviewees, most directly in the listing of skills such as "communicating (to staff) the importance of treating students like adults" and in the strong emphasis on marketing, or persuading

community agencies and the public to become involved in the program.

10. Concern for image. This competency was especially strong. Adult/community education administrators know that atten-dance at their programs is directly related to their pro-gram's image. Both community-wide and individually-targeted public relations were stressed.

11. Tactical adaptability. This competency was reflected in the administrators' continual search for successful course offerings and marketing strategies.

12. Achievement motivation. Several individuals interviewed referred to the desire to "build a better program." One stated that to do the job well required a competitive atti-tude: "You have to want to be the best."

13. Management control. Several interviewees mentioned specific efforts to obtain feedback from students and to begin immed-iately to work with teachers whose classes are not going well. Adult/community education administrators are strongly focused on this competency, since their students do not return if they are dissatisfied with their classes.

14. Developmental orientation. Adult/community education admin-istrators display a very strong developmental orientation, both for their students and their personnel. An attitude listed under personnel administration, for example, is "com-mitted to developing staff and giving them room to grow." The strong focus on building programs based on needs assess-ment also reflects a strong developmental orientation.

15. Organizational ability. Organizational skills were specifi-cally listed in the generic skills, and organizational ability was implied in many other a eas.

16. Delegation. Several interviewees mentioned the importance of delegation, and two indicated that delegation was one of the skills they most needed but were least prepared for when they first became adult/community education administrators.

17. Self-presentation. This competency was strongly represented in the interviewees' responses. They mentioned public speaking, the ability to design presentations, small and large group communication skills, and the ability to articu-late the views of adult-community education.

18. Written communication. Writing skills were specifically mentioned.

19. Organizational sensitivity. This competency was reflected in the interviewees' concern for involving staff in decision-making and interfacing positively with the day school program.

For discussion of these comparisons, see page 8.

Appendix E

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